



The Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust

Learning Communities, Inspired by Faith

Trust Social Media Policy



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| POLICY DOCUMENT | Trust Social Media Policy |
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| Lead Member of Staff: | Trust IT Manager |
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Mission Statement

All policies are written in line with our Trust Mission statement:

With Jesus Christ at the centre of the life of the Trust, we seek to provide learning communities offering the highest possible standards of education. We are committed to working in partnership and trust for the common good. We strive to encourage and empower children and young people to recognise and realise their God-given potential and to discern their vocation in life. As learning communities inspired by faith, we celebrate achievement, offering each other challenge and support, as together we follow Christ in self-giving love and service.



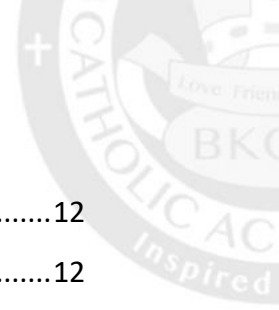
Change Control

| Version | Date | Author | Changes |
|----------------|-------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3 | 03/2020 | CTU | Added section Guidance for Managing your personal use of social media and Guidance on Managing School/Social media accounts |
| 2.1 | 09/2020 | CTU | West Yorkshire Safeguarding agency removed and change to refer to the Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer. |
| 2.0 | 12/2019 | CTU | Extensive changes to include official Academy social media accounts. "Use of Social Media for Professional Purposes" |
| 1.0 | 11/2016 | HR | Original Document |



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Introduction

The widespread availability and use of social media applications bring opportunities to engage and communicate with each other in a range of ways. It is important that we understand that employees will use these technologies as they are integral to modern life. Indeed, it is important that employees understand these technologies as children and young people are engaging in social media more than any other group in society and it significantly influences their lives.

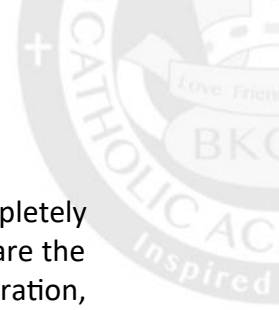
Alongside these opportunities there are risks attached to the use of social media. Distribution of material cannot be controlled. Once posted to an initial target audience, material can be posted anywhere through the networks of each individual in that audience and beyond.

It is important to ensure that we consider the above in line with our duties in the Trust and Academies and as part of the wider area, as well as our legal responsibilities and our reputation. It is also important that we encourage an understanding that online activity via social media is subject to all of the norms, protocols and regulations that apply to relationships in “real life”.

For example, our use of social media applications has implications for our duty to safeguard children, young people and vulnerable adults.

The policy requirements in this document aim to provide this balance to support individuals’ rights whilst providing a framework of good practice.

The use of social media, as with all other communication channels, should comply with the Trust Code of Conduct, Acceptable User Policy and Use of Electronic Equipment, Safeguarding



and Data Protection policies. There is a temptation to treat social media completely differently than other channels, whereas in fact most of the principles and guidance are the same. Therefore, employees should treat the use of social media with the same consideration, as they would do when communicating over the telephone, by email and by other means.

Aims of the Policy

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that:

- Employees are aware of expectations of appropriate use of social media applications;
- The Trust and Academies are not exposed to legal and governance risks;
- The reputation of the Trust and Academies is not adversely affected;
- Safeguarding of children and young people is not threatened by use of social media.

Scope – who does the policy apply to

The policy covers the use of social media applications by those employees and agency workers who are under the direction of the Trust and Academy Councils.

The principles and social networking standards within this policy apply to volunteers, Academy Council members and other third parties in academies (including contractors not under the direction of the Trust or Academy Councils), referred to in this document as “Other Academy Representatives”.

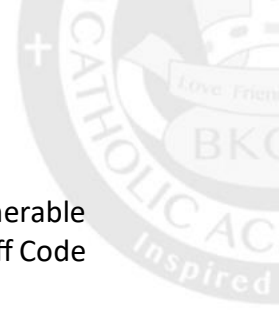
The requirements of this policy apply to all uses of social media applications. It applies to the use of social media for both-work and personal purposes, whether during working hours or otherwise. The policy applies regardless of whether social media is accessed using Academy facilities and equipment or equipment belonging to members of staff.

For the purposes of this policy “Social Media” is a type of interactive online media that allows parties to communicate instantly with each other or to share data in a public forum. This policy will also apply to any new or emerging technologies or systems which may develop in the future.

Social media applications include, but are not limited to:

- Social networking sites such as Facebook or LinkedIn;
- Blogs and Vlogs,;
- Online discussion forums, including those that are part of a larger sites such as TES, BBC or other newspapers;
- Collaborative spaces, such as office 365 and Google Programs;
- Media sharing services, for example YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp, Flickr;
- “Microblogging” applications, for example Twitter;

Employees should bear in mind that information they share through social media applications, even if they are on “private” spaces, is still subject to copyright, Data



Protection/GDPR and Freedom of Information legislation, the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and other legislation. They must also operate in line with the Trust Staff Code of Conduct.

Responsibilities

Managers and Headteachers should:

- Ensure this policy document is communicated and made available to all staff. They will remind employees annually:
 - to familiarise themselves with the policy; and
 - how to access a copy of the policy.
- Investigate breaches of this policy and take action using the Disciplinary Policy if appropriate.
- Make other Academy representatives aware of the principles and social networking standards in this policy that apply to them.

Employees Should:

- Employees should familiarise themselves with, and adhere to, the policy.

Trust Human Resources (HR) should:

- Contribute to the review and update of this policy as appropriate
- Support Headteachers and managers on this policy as appropriate in accordance with the academy procedures.

Trust IT Team Should:

- Contribute to the review and update of this policy as appropriate.
- Monitor the required Trust wide IT applications used to ensure compliance.

Use of Social Media for Professional Purposes

Professional communications are those made through official channels, posted on an Academy account or using the Academy name. All professional communications are within the scope of this policy.

Process for creating new accounts

The Trust community is encouraged to consider if a social media account will help them in their work, e.g. a history department Twitter account, or a “Friends of the Academy” Facebook page.

Anyone wishing to create such an account must present a business case to the Academy Leadership Team which covers the following points:-

- The aim of the account.
- The intended audience.



- How the account will be promoted.
- Who will monitor and run the account? (at least two staff members should be named).
- Will the account be open or private/closed?
- A record made by the Academy of logon information, associated email addresses and access methods.
- Where there is an option, Comments and conversation should be as restricted.

Following consideration an application will be approved or rejected. In all cases, the Academy Management must be satisfied that anyone running a social media account on behalf of the Academy or Trust has read and understood this policy. This also applies to anyone who is not directly employed by the Academy, including volunteers or parents.

Monitoring

Academy and Trust accounts must be monitored regularly and frequently. Any comments, queries or complaints made through those accounts should be responded to within 24 hours (or on the next working day if outside working hours) even if the response is only to acknowledge receipt. Regular monitoring and intervention are essential in case a situation arises where bullying or any other inappropriate behaviour arises on a Trust or Academy social media account.

Behaviour

- The Trust requires that all users using social media adhere to the standard of behaviour as set out in this policy and other relevant policies.
- Digital communications by staff must be professional and respectful at all times and in accordance with this policy. Staff will not use social media to infringe on the rights and privacy of others or make ill-considered comments or judgments about staff. Trust and Academy social media accounts must not be used for personal gain. Staff must ensure that confidentiality is maintained on social media even after they leave the employment of the Trust.
- Users must declare who they are in social media posts or accounts. Anonymous posts are discouraged in relation to Trust and Academy activity.
- If a journalist makes contact about posts made using social media, staff must follow the Trust Media Policy before responding.
- Unacceptable conduct, (e.g. defamatory, discriminatory, offensive, harassing content or a breach of data protection, confidentiality, copyright) will be considered extremely seriously by the Trust and will be reported as soon as possible to a relevant senior member of staff, and escalated where appropriate.



Legal considerations

- Users of social media should consider the copyright of the content they are sharing and, where necessary, should seek permission from the copyright holder before sharing.

Handling abuse

- When acting on behalf of the Trust or Academy, handle offensive comments swiftly and with sensitivity.
- If a conversation turns and becomes offensive or unacceptable, Trust or Academy users should block, report or delete other users or their comments/posts and should inform the audience exactly why the action was taken
- If you feel that you or someone else is subject to abuse by colleagues through use of a social networking site, then this action must be reported using the agreed Trust protocols.

Handover

When the controller of a Trust or Academy social media account no longer has involvement with the Academy, the controller should pass over all account information to the Headteacher or the Trust IT Team. Passwords should be reset once handover has been completed.

Tone

The tone of the content published on social media should be appropriate to the audience, whilst retaining appropriate levels of professional standards. Key words to consider when composing messages are:

- Engaging
- Conversational
- Informative
- Friendly (on certain platforms, e.g. Facebook)

Use of images

Trust and Academy use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to;

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the appropriate GDPR and Trusts or Academy Consent Forms. If anyone, for any reason, asks not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via Trust or Academy controlled social media accounts;
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on Trust or Academy social media accounts. Students should be



appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any Academy list of children whose images must not be published;

- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately;

Use of Social Media in the Classroom

On occasions social media may be required to be used in the classroom for professional purposes; it may also be required to communicate academy activities i.e. sports activities, field trips. Appropriate advice should be taken from the Headteacher and authorised personnel to ensure safe practice prior to use.

Communication with Children and Young People

Communication between children and adults should remain professional at all times:

- Do not use a personal social media account to communicate with children or young people;
- Do not share any personal information with a child or young person;
- Do not request, or respond to any personal information from a child or young person, other than that which is appropriate as part of your professional role;
- Ensure that all your communications are transparent and open to scrutiny;
- Do not give your personal contact details to children including email, home or mobile telephone numbers unless the need to do so is agreed with Senior Management and parents/carers;
- Do not use social media communication channels to send personal messages to a child or young person.

If there is a legitimate, professional requirement to communicate on-line with children, this communication should be conducted through the approved academy social media or communication systems.

Guidance on Managing School/Social media accounts

The Do's

- Check with a senior leader before publishing content that may have controversial implications for the school
- Make it clear who is posting content
- Use an appropriate and professional tone
- Be respectful to all parties
- Ensure you have permission to 'share' other peoples' materials and acknowledge the author
- Think before responding to comments and, when in doubt, get a second opinion
- Seek advice and report any mistakes using the school's reporting process
- Consider turning off tagging people in images where possible



The Don'ts

- Don't make comments, post content or link to materials that will bring the school/academy into disrepute
- Don't publish confidential or commercially sensitive material
- Don't breach copyright, data protection or other relevant legislation
- Consider the appropriateness of content for any audience of school/academy accounts, and don't link to, embed or add potentially inappropriate content
- Don't post derogatory, defamatory, offensive, harassing or discriminatory content
- Don't use social media to air internal grievances

Personal Use of Social Media on Academy Equipment

We recognise that employees may work long hours and occasionally use social media for personal activities in the academy or by means of our computers, networks and other IT resources and communications systems.

We authorise such occasional use so long as it does not involve unprofessional or inappropriate content and does not interfere with your employment responsibilities or productivity (so not during paid working time).

Using Trust or Academy equipment for personal social media in work time, circulating chain letters or other spam is not permitted. Circulating or posting commercial, personal, religious or political solicitations, or promotion of outside organisations unrelated to the academy's business are also prohibited.

Failure to Comply with the Policy

Any breach of this policy by an employee may result in disciplinary action up to and including dismissal. Disciplinary action may be taken regardless of whether the breach is committed outside working hours, and regardless of whether our equipment or facilities are used for the purpose of committing the breach. Any employee suspected of breaching the policy will be required to co-operate with an investigation. This would be in accordance with any policies affecting the monitoring of electronic communications and in accordance with an employee's legal rights.

Judgement as to what specific examples constitute inappropriate use will be made by HR, the Headteacher or Academy Council of an Academy on a case by case basis considering the circumstances of the case, reasonableness, what risks could have reasonably been known at the time the offence took place and consistency.

Examples of cases which may involve disciplinary action or dismissal include:



- Posting comments on Facebook or other Social Media about pupils or their parents which are deemed to be inappropriate and may divulge personal information;
- Commenting about other colleagues at work or sending messages to them which could constitute harassment, discrimination, victimisation or bullying and are deemed to be inappropriate;
- Posting comments about personal views of issues in the public domain which could lead the academy and its community to lose confidence in the employee, for example encouraging anti-social behaviour likely to cause disruption to the local community, racist comments, sexist comments or any comments relating to the other protected characteristics identified under the Equality Act 2010;
- Joining groups which are deemed to be inappropriate for employees of the academy to be members of (such as where there is a clear conflict of interests between the group and the employee's professional role or the employer);
- Inappropriate relationships with pupils or former pupils where there is a breach of professional boundaries arising out of the use of social media.

The policy is not intended to restrict all activity on social media however, employees are asked to exercise caution and professional judgement about what they use it for, who they communicate with and subject matter.

Employees are advised to make full use of the security settings available within the systems but note that these cannot be guaranteed to provide protection against allegations being made or disciplinary action being taken.

Concerns about Safeguarding

In some circumstances an employee's use of social media may give rise to the concern that they may have:

- Behaved in a way that has harmed a child or may have harmed a child or;
- Possibly committed a criminal offence against a child or;
- Behaved towards a child in a way that indicates he or she would pose a risk of harm if they work regularly or closely with children.

In these circumstances advice and consultation should be sought from the Academy Designated Safeguarding Officer.

Guidance for Managing your personal use of social media

“Nothing” on social media is truly private

Social media can blur the lines between your professional and private life. Don't use the school/academy logo and/or branding on personal accounts

Check your settings regularly and test your privacy

Keep an eye on your digital footprint

Keep your personal information private

Regularly review your connections – keep them to those you want to be connected to



When posting online consider; Scale, Audience and Permanency of what you post
If you want to criticise, do it politely.

Take control of your images – do you want to be tagged in an image? What would children or parents say about you if they could see your images?

Know how to report a problem

Principles

Employees must adhere to the following principles and other Academy representatives, although not specifically mentioned in the paragraphs below, should follow the same principles:

Safeguarding

- Responsibilities for safeguarding apply equally to online behaviour as they do to all other behaviour.
- Employees should carefully consider in each case the appropriateness of soliciting or accepting online relationships with pupils or ex-pupils of our Academies. In this respect, responsible and appropriate relationships with children should be considered with regard to the employee's role in the Academy and be consistent with all other relationships with children.
- See [Concerns About Safeguarding](#) about the action to be taken if there are concerns about safeguarding.

Respect

- We expect that employees will not post any information online that could bring the Trust or Academy into disrepute. They must respect pupils, colleagues, parents and other users' rights to fair and equitable treatment. Abusive or hateful content will not be tolerated.
- It is unacceptable to make derogatory or defamatory remarks about other employees, pupils or anyone else related to the academy.

Confidentiality

- All material posted on social media applications should respect GDPR/Data Protection and confidentiality regulations, policies or statutes. Personal information of others including colleagues and pupils must not be placed online without the appropriate permissions.

Political or Financial Interests

- Social media should not be used for any political or financial interests that may contravene other policies such as the Trust Staff Code of Conduct.



Illegal, Sexual or Offensive Material

- It is the opinion of the Trust and Academies that it is incompatible with the role of any employee to post any such material via social media. Therefore sourcing, sending, posting or other involvement in offensive material: sexually explicit, or offensive content related to the nine protected characteristics identified under the Equality Act 2010 (race, religion, sex, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnerships, disability, and age) will not be tolerated.

Representation of the Trust and Academies

- Employees must not post any Academy information or logos online without the express permission of the Headteacher or other authorised personnel.
- Employees must not breach copyright by, for example, using someone else's images or written content without permission or failing to give acknowledgement where permission has been given to reproduce something.
- All employees are under a duty of care to avoid a situation arising where they are shown to be acting in conflict with the best interests of the academy and should not criticise, damage or act in anyway which is against the best interests of the academy.

Good Practice Protocols

It is advisable to follow certain protocols in personal use of social media:

- Do not mention work, your opinions of your colleagues or processes and projects on your own private social media networks;
- If there is reference to the Trust or Academy on a personal social media profile, then ensure that there is a declaration on the profile or page that the views expressed are yours alone and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Trust or Academy;
- Consider carefully whether it is appropriate to accept colleagues, parents or other academy users as "friends" on your private social networks. It may be advisable to manage your online "friends" in social networks by creating friend groups then restricting access to certain information and photographs by particular groups;
- No personal social media relationships with pupils or ex pupils.

It can be problematic to ban certain relationships online, for example a parent may also be a relation or a colleague may also be a spouse, but at all times the individual is responsible for ensuring that their online relationships are appropriate to their position in the Academy or Trust and, given their choice of online relationships, that they ensure the information posted online is appropriate to those relationships.



Raising Concerns

Other policies and procedures adopted by the Academy or Trust, such as those covering Whistleblowing, Grievance, and Bullying and Harassment should be used to raise any concerns about your treatment at work or any other concerns you may have. The use of social media to raise such concerns will be considered inappropriate.

Associated Documents

Social media should not be used in a way that breaches any of the Academy or Trusts other policies. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Trust Staff Code of Conduct
- Trust Acceptable User Agreement and Use of Electronic Equipment
- Trust Disciplinary Policy and Procedure
- Trust Data Protection Policy

Monitoring and Review of this Policy

The Trust shall be responsible for reviewing this policy from time to time to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.

Staff are invited to comment on this policy and suggest ways in which it might be improved by contacting the Trust IT Manager.

The Bishop Konstant Catholic Academy Trust is an exempt charity regulated by the Secretary of State for Education. It is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, company number 8253770, whose registered office is at St Wilfrid's Catholic High School, Cutsyke Road, Featherstone WF7 6BD



Appendix A: Personal Social Networking Standards

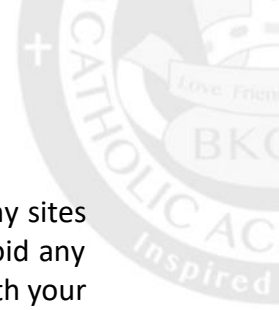
The below sets out the standards expected of all staff representatives when using personal social media:

Do

- **Act responsibly at all times.** Even if you do not identify your profession or place of work, please be aware that your conduct online could jeopardise any professional registration and/or your employment.
- **Protect your own privacy.** Think about what kind of information you want to share online and who you want to share this with. Adjust your privacy settings accordingly.
- **Remember everything is public.** Even with the highest level of privacy settings, once something is online it can be copied and redistributed, and it is easy to lose control of the information. Work on the assumption that everything you post online will be permanent and will be shared with others.
- **Take appropriate action if you are the target of abuse online.** If you are the target of bullying or abuse online you can take action in dealing with this, such as blocking individuals from interacting with you and reporting inappropriate activity.
- **Be considerate to your colleagues.** Pictures or information about colleagues should not be posted on social networking sites unless you have the agreement of the individual concerned. Always remove information about a colleague if they ask you to do so.
- **Respect the privacy of others.** If photographs are taken at an event then check whether those in attendance expect that any photos may appear on a public social networking site before posting. Remember it may not always be an appropriate way to share information whether work related or not.
- **Remember the benefits.** Used responsibly, social media can be accessed to keep up to date with a number of professions and information.

Do Not

- **Share confidential information online.** In line with the Data Protection Act 1998 employees should not share any child/family identifiable information online or any personal information about colleagues. In addition to this, any confidential information about the Trust or Academy should not be revealed online.
- **Build or pursue relationships with children, parents, families.** Even if the child, or parent is no longer within your care, the Trust or Academy does not deem this as



appropriate behaviour. If you receive a request from a child/parent then many sites allow you to ignore this request without the individual being informed to avoid any offence. If you are concerned about this in any circumstance, please discuss with your manager/Headteacher.

- **Use social networking sites to inform professional practice.** There are some circumstances/job roles where this may be appropriate, however careful consideration and discussions with management should be applied.
- **Discuss work related issue online.** This takes into account conversations about parents, children, colleagues or anything else which may identify the academy online and bring it into potential disrepute. Even if you think these conversations have been anonymised they are very likely to be deemed inappropriate.
- **Post pictures of children/young people/their parents.** Never post pictures of parents or their children online even if they have asked you to do this. Employees should never take pictures of parents and children unless they are relevant and within the boundaries of the academy's policy on taking digital images. Permission from the subject and parents of children should always be obtained. If your mobile phone has a camera then this should not be used in the workplace except for publicity purposes must be specifically authorised by the Headteacher; these should then be placed on a shared area by authorised personnel in each Academy and delete from your mobile phone or device or take any steps possible to delete from your mobile phone or device.
- **Raise concerns about your work.** Social networking sites should never be used for raising or escalating concerns at work. If you have concerns then these should be raised through either discussing with your line manager or following the relevant policy/procedure for raising concerns at work.
- **Engage in activities online which may bring the Trust or Academy into disrepute.** Think through what activities you take part in whilst online and what you do or say that may bring the Trust or Academy into disrepute. Any reports of this will be reviewed in line with their appropriateness.
- **Be abusive to or bully other colleagues.** Social networking sites should not be used as a forum for abusive behaviour towards colleagues.
- **Post derogatory, defamatory or offensive comments about colleagues, the child/parents/families, your work or the Trust or Academy.** Everything posted on a social networking site should be deemed as open to the public and it is therefore unacceptable to use this as a forum for posting inappropriate comments.
- **All of the above applies to both open and private sections of any social networking site employees identify themselves with.**



Monitoring and Review of this Policy

The Trust shall be responsible for reviewing this policy from time to time to ensure that it meets legal requirements and reflects best practice.